



*“Zersetzung Bodhisattva: Homelessness Journals, Notes, and Other Writings”* by Patrick Callan.

September 6, 2021

\*The Cover Art includes a modified image based on [this poster](#) by the Crimethinc Ex Workers Collective.

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## **Introduction:**

This is a collection of my journal entries written during my first year of being homeless. The purpose of making something like this publicly available is that homeless people are rarely given the opportunity to speak for themselves in meaningful ways, and when that does happen, it's intentionally abbreviated, leaving only the parts specifically relevant to the narrative and agenda of people who benefit from providing this narrow window into that person's world--so, it's exploitation. I'm interested in being part of changing that.

The informality of the style (journaling) and the raw, personal nature of it says more about the nature of homelessness than it does about me as a writer. You get things on paper in the rare moments that you can and then you have to squirrel them away in your backpack and hope you can hang onto it, and typically, things are happening so fast, the organization is what you can manage. My approach was similar to Gonzo Journalism, minus exaggeration, hyperbole of any kind, and I approached things like my emotions (which one unavoidably confronts within the context of being homeless) and my body's response to them as another detail among my observations, but the place I was writing from remained objective and calm in my goal of reporting what was happening as truthfully and accurate as I was capable of.

I'm putting this out and promoting this myself. If you like what I'm doing, share it with your friends and on your social media. A lot of work has gone into creating this, and writing the things that I do and being outspoken, truthful and active on social media and in real life in the way that I am means I've made my fair share of enemies who can and do make my life more difficult, this includes but isn't limited to frequent targeting, stalking, and harassment especially by law enforcement. I anticipate retaliation for publishing this piece, even though some time has gone by since it was written and there is no legitimate reason to find any of the contents objectionable....I don't think so. If you would like to support what I'm doing as a writer, artist, organizer, activist, and my ability to survive and do more things like this, put some money in my paypal [paypal-anabasis0802@gmail.com ]

If you're looking for more ways to get involved personally and do something to address homelessness, I recommend looking up mutual aid groups and networks in your area. Also, if you think someone is homeless, in your community, or if you live in a bigger city, if you have the opportunity to speak with homeless people, I suggest doing it and having conversations and getting to know them (if it seems like a good idea, some it's not, most are actually really normal) on a one on one basis. You can ask them what would help. It may take some time to build enough of a rapport and trust before they'll tell you, but getting to know people and doing things directly is in my opinion the best option if you're looking to help.

If you'd like to send me a message, my email is anabasis0802@gmail.com . I'm also on Facebook, though my profile is set to private, send me a message and introduce yourself before sending a friend request. You can follow me

on youtube and instagram. I'll include a list of links to other writing and projects at the end.

**-Patrick Callan** , *September 6, 2021*

## **Tuesday, September 19, 2017**

I got out of work around 11am on Sunday. After that, I hit the thrift store looking for stuff to turn around and resell. I didn't find anything. On my way back, I got caught in traffic because of a street festival that had Lake Street blocked off.

I had persistent ruminating thoughts about what I should have said in the message I sent to my brother-in-law a few weeks back. But I know that no matter what I'd say, people generally have no way to understand the betrayal, gaslighting, the manipulation, and the abuse that was perpetrated by my mother and father and supported by my sisters. I get it, he's married to my sister and has to see my parents regularly. Even if he sees it, it'd be difficult to speak up; and it makes sense that he'd take the perspective of: there's 2 sides to every story and I'm only interested in the facts.

My mother said to me at one point when I asked her why she was going along with my father's seemingly mercurial, childish madness, she looked me in the eyes and lowered her voice and said: *"I'm trying to save my marriage."* That was it. It didn't really matter that I was being abused and fucked with, whatever my father was doing was somehow fine. I was getting thrown under the bus because that's how he wanted it and she was choosing her evil husband over her own child. I've always been in her corner and I never asked to be born.

When I got back. I struggled with being overly sensitive while hanging out with Aiyana. I had a beer and took a nap. I woke up, got some chinese food and then we had a good night staying up all night. Communication was rough at first. I was overly sensitive and too quick to feel like I wasn't being heard.

It was also really cold. I took a shower and warmed up, then we got down to work, coming up with a plan for my day off. Discussed Storage, Going to ML, going to the PD and all the details involved in that.

The next day we went to Good Will and finally got clothes. I started writing a letter in the car to my Niece and Nephew telling them that I still care, I wish I could be there, and they're going to be told a lot of things about me that aren't true.

Then we went back to the place, I fell asleep around 1 and woke up and came into work.

## **Tuesday, September 26, 2017**

I went to Storage today and uncovered more insane meddling by my parents. They were apparently concerned some of their stuff might be in my unit.

It's like they're picking at my corpse and I'm not even dead yet.

## **Friday, September 29, 2017**

I woke up this morning at 8am on the nose. I didn't need an alarm.

I went to the corner store to grab energy drinks and donuts. The lady who runs the place asked how my day was going, I replied "I don't know, I just woke up." She laughed and said something I didn't understand.

When I got back, the door was locked, I thought maybe I'd locked it behind me accidentally. I knocked softly, Aiyana opened it, informed me Dee had actually come out and locked it behind me. Then he came out and asked if it had been one of us knocking. I said it was, I'd gone to the store. — — shortly thereafter, Aiyana went to the bathroom, Dee comes out of his room, asked if I'm working today and what time to what time, he said he needed to talk — we needed to come up with a *'payment plan'* for paying him back — and *'he couldn't afford to keep paying rent on a living room that he couldn't even use.'* — and how his *'anxiety was so bad that he was afraid to even spend time at home.'* — — BOLD FACED TWISTING MANIPULATED EGO FUCKING MANIACAL PROJECTION MOTHER FUCKING SHIT — -SOUNDS A PERSON CAN FUCKIN MAKE WITH THEIR MOUTH FUCKIN HORSESHIT MOTHERFUCKER. UGGGGHHHHHHHH!!!!

## **Monday, October 2, 2017 - 2:20 AM**

The only thing Dee was willing to accept as collateral for the money we owed him was "generally, something like a computer. Then more specifically, my macbook pro." — — which is suspicious AF. He's aware it's set up as a client computer — — it's valuable as evidence only — — and my father desperately wants it.

## **Monday, October 23, 2017 - 8:10 AM**

Me and Aiyana got 86'd from the Bloomington Denny's for being \$1.39 short on our \$5 bill .... for 2 coffees. In a way it's funny. While it was happening, with how much shame she was trying to heap on us, it seemed so absurd. It was 2 coffees.

## **Saturday, November 18, 2017 - 8:14 AM**

Life is currently just fucking hard. Being homeless has a way of whittling away at and paring down all the different facets of preference and personality, or at least the awareness of it.

You exist on terms you don't choose.

You're insecure, in the most literal and real sense.

The hypersensitivity and attention you begin to pay to reading people, situations — the waves of their emotions — — it's exhausting. — — it's isolating from the inner world created by a lack of privacy.

## **Monday, December 11, 2017**

Currently living on the sly at my work. Last week, I worked up the nerve to bring Toby, our cat up to the office that me and Aiyana have been staying in at night. I don't know if anyone's alright with what we're doing but it feels good to be okay and having to fight the cold so hard.

I'm working here 6 days a week. With GCN being so understaffed, maybe it buys us a little leeway.

Last Tuesday we went to hang out with a friend of mine who I keep in touch with on facebook. We went to middle school and high school together. She helped us out while we were stuck at the truck stop in Temple, GA. We got to shower, work on the car in her garage. We got to drink and be social. It was nice.

## **New Years Day 2018:**

On the morning of January 1, 2018, I arrived at the studio for my scheduled shift. I clocked in at approximately 8:52AM. My scheduled start time was 9AM, but we were expected to arrive early, between 5-30 minutes early depending on personal preference, what was most advantageous for the shows we were scheduled to engineer and what we were able to do, which could vary, but it was well established that we could not be late and should therefore always be early.



I clocked in on the Linux machine that was used primarily for clocking in and out, referring to the schedule of who works when and the schedule of all of the shows that pass through the network, what board (if any) is used, and of course, the name, time and day, and the method of which the show comes into the station. This computer is separated by a 5 foot partition from board 4 on the right and board three on the left.

My coworker Brad was the only one in the studio at the time that I clocked in. Because of the partition, I could not see what he was working on. I knew he wasn't running a show, but I did not know if he was actively working on his own musical recording projects or playing video games on his laptop as he would often do during down time or long breaks.

Although we have a light-hearted and jovial rapport, conversation never strays very far from our work. We are able to coordinate our time and energy efficiently. We both care about working hard, doing good work, cooperation, teamwork, and making sure that everyone can utilize and benefit from downtime as it comes up. When I'd first started, Brad had done the most to show me the ropes and get me up to speed on what I needed to know to do the job. If I had any questions or needed clarification....something about shows, GCN, or anything technical, I'd usually ask Brad. We also worked an intense amount of hours, both 6 days a week, long shifts....I think the most hours of board operators working at GCN at the time.

I clocked in, we both said “Hi” and made small talk about our New Years’. I confided that I was very tired and a little bit hungover. He asked if I was there just to hang out I said “No.” I explained I was scheduled to work, so I was determined to be there. He told me everything was in replay and there wasn’t a lot to do.

**Me:** *Really? Do you need me to do anything?*

**Brad:** *No, it’s pretty much all taken care of.*

**Me:** *Really? What about coffee? I could make coffee...*

**Brad:** *No, I picked up coffee on my way in.*

**Me:** *Well shit....then I’m going to go take a nap. If you need me to do anything, let me know.*

**Brad:** *I will.*

Brad knew I’d been staying in one of the empty offices on the third floor. He knew where to find me, could do it quickly, and knew I wanted to work. Napping was not uncommon at GCN.

-----Fast Forward to Wednesday, January 3, 2018:

I was at Board 3. It was during the first segment of “*The Daniel Brigman Show*,” a show I’ve only engineered one other time. I was still unfamiliar with it, but was aware that Daniel Brigman and another show that he’s a part of have a very long relationship with the network. It was important to make a good impression and establish a good working relationship.

My eyes were instinctively in rotation between my wrist watch, the upcoming events on the

wavestation, scanning the email from his producer that contained the notes for that day's show, watching the VU meter on the board, making sure the levels were where they needed to be, checking that the traffic cue was at 3 o'clock and the traffic fader to the mains was halfway to unity, and cross referencing with my ears all of the items previously mentioned that occupied my visual awareness.

**Kyle:** *Patrick, did you work monday?*

**Me:** *Yeah....*

**Kyle:** *I was there all day monday. I didn't see you.*

**Me:** *Everything was in replay.*

**Kyle:** *"Sons of Liberty" wasn't replay. I was your show. I did it.*

**Me:** *Yeah, I forgot about that one....*

*Look....I clocked in at 9 AM, everything was in replay, I went and took a nap. I checked in at 3 to see if "Nutrimedical Report" was replay, it was. So I came back at 5 and clocked out.*

**Kyle:** *There was plenty of work, there were plenty of shows to be cut up. Look at the clipboard. Check the email. You didn't work .*

**Me:** *Okay. Can you take Monday off my timesheet?*

**Kyle:** *This is bad. You said you worked hours that you didn't. That's Fraud.*

*You could have come to me and said: 'Hey, could you correct this...?'*

*If it weren't holiday pay, it wouldn't be a big deal.*

**Me:** *It was a mistake. Can you correct it?*

**Kyle:** *I don't know. This is bad....*

[And then Kyle stormed of... ]

Kyle asked if he could *"borrow me for a minute."* I said "Yes" and followed him into the recording room just off to the side of the main studio. He took a seat in a chair against the wall opposite the door we'd entered through. George was slouched in a chair immediately to the right of the door.

There was a backless stool positioned equidistant from each of the two men. Kyle motioned for me to sit down but I instinctively stopped halfway between George and the stool, it was a fear and aversion to being surrounded, trapped, and physically assaulted at a numerical disadvantage, and without a clear route to escape.

A second went by and Kyle told me to have a seat.

I carefully took a seat in the stool. It was awkwardly six inches to a foot taller than the chairs either of the men sat in. I half sat on the stool so my feet could still reach the ground.

**Kyle:** *On a Human Level....*

*I really hate having to do this....and I am sorry.*

*This is really bad....*

*Clocking in and leaving and then coming back to clock out....That's Fraud!*

*It's --- It's Stealing!*

*And it's holiday pay. If it hadn't been a holiday it wouldn't have been such a big deal....*

*....and really it's a liability issue....*

**Me:** *I'm not understanding your meaning when you say "Liability." What do you mean by that?*

**Kyle:** *It means when you're clocked in here and you leave and no one knows where you are, if something happens to you....we get held responsible.*

**Me:** *Alright. I get it.*

**Kyle:** *And....you were told you could stay in the offices on the third floor but you couldn't move all your stuff in....and you couldn't bring the cat in....and recently....someone saw a cat.*

**Me:** *Yeah. Am I being fired?*

**Kyle:** *Yes.*

**George:** *Yes.*

**Me:** *Fuck....*

**Kyle:** *And if you file for unemployment we will fight it and we'll say it was because of fraud....but you're welcome to try....*

**Me:** *I'm not....filing for...I'm not filing for unemployment.*

**Kyle:** *Now, you're scheduled to work until 5 today but I understand if you don't want to finish the rest of your shift. You'll still get paid for the two hours you were scheduled to work....and you can pick up your paycheck on Friday. I'll have it or....well, you know where they usually are.*

**Me:** *So....do I need to get off the property right away? Do I need to sign anything?*

**Kyle:** *No.*

**George :** *No. That's not necessary.*

**Me:** *Can I go now?*

**Kyle:** *Yes.*

**George:** *Yes.*

**Me:** *Right on....*

[I stood up and had just taken my first step toward the door.]

**Kyle:** *What do you need from us?*

[I turned around to look at him and paused, it struck me as such an odd question.]

**Kyle:** *On a Human Level.... what do you need from us?*

**Me:** *Uh....I legitimately have no place to go. I have no idea what I'm going to do....If me and my girlfriend could stay in that office we've been hanging out in until some time in the morning...*

**George:** *That should be fine.*

**Me:** *Cool. Thank you.*

Then I exited the room and walked through the main studio towards board 3. McKenzie was at the board covering for me while I had been gone. I said "*Excuse me*" but I doubt it was even audible. I reached past him to pick up my notebook, power bank and phone. I started to walk towards the elevator, then realized I had forgotten my e cig and had to go back. My second

time walking to the elevator, Kyle inserted himself into my path, my eyes had been fixed only on the hallway out of the studio, I did not want to talk to anyone. Then he said to me : *"On a human level....I'm sorry."*

I looked him in the eye as he came closer. The silence hung there for a moment as our paths met, then I said *"Yep,"* although it would have been hardly audible, I gave him a nod and kept walking.

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## **Email Correspondence between Myself and Vince**

\*Vince is a host of one of the shows on GCN who I'd befriended and had twice been a guest on his show.

### **Email from me to Vince - Sent January 3, 2018**

*Hey Vince,  
I got fired from GCN today. I wanted to let you know I'm still interested in going on air with you and will listen and call in as I'm able. I'll be okay.  
It's funny now, the thing you often say about USA prepares instructors often being unemployed or unemployable.  
-Patrick*

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### **Vince's Reply to me - Sent January 4, 2018**

*Patrick -  
May I ask what happened?*

Are you OK?  
What is next?  
All the best,  
Vincent

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### **My Reply to Vince- Sent January 8, 2018**

Vince,

*To answer your question-I don't really know what happened. I was told it was because I purposely falsified my hours, but that wasn't true and doesn't make sense. And it made me suspicious that when I was being told that I was being fired for falsifying my hours, they immediately skipped to talking about how me and my girlfriend had been staying in one of the offices on the 3rd floor, like we were told we could, but had violated the conditions we were given and said we had moved too much of our stuff in (sleeping bags, space heater, backpacks, small tool backpack, and a small bin of sewing tools and supplies....I thought that was reasonable, I guess I was wrong); and I had initially been told we couldn't bring our cat in, but as it got colder, I was going out to the car every 2-3 hours, getting in a sleeping bag and putting the cat in the sleeping bag with me, and spending as much time as I could warming him up....after a couple weeks of that, I said "fuck it," and snuck him in. we kept him in his kitty carrier during the daytime with a blanket over it and let him out late at night just in the little office we were staying in. ....so yes, I had been told not to bring the cat in, that was a rule I had very consciously broken and expected to be asked to account for .... so yeah, that was brought up too, I wasn't being fired for those things, but they were brought up as if to distract me and get under my skin. I wasn't asked to say anything in my defense. There was no discussion. It had just been decided and I was being told. But they wouldn't come right out and say they were firing me, I had to ask.*

*So I took it on the chin, they asked "on a human level" what "i needed." (What a question, right?) I explained I had no place to go until I got my paycheck on friday, and asked if me and my girlfriend could stay in the upstairs office until then.... they said that was fine.*



*Then I went upstairs, told my girlfriend and I cried my fucking eyes out. Then I went and got a 6 pack and we stayed up late discussing what we wanted to do next. Then we slept for 2 days, laying low, gathering our strength and avoiding being noticed. I got my paycheck and we left on Friday.*

*I loved that job, and aside from working for myself, it's the only job where I've been totally committed and put future plans and goals on hold because that's where I needed to be and I was learning what I needed to learn. Also, aside from working for myself, I have never worked that hard or that much, but it was what I needed.*

*So, it was devastating. I also really needed the job and had nowhere else to go, and at the point me and my girlfriend left GCN .... into temps around 1-3 degrees. I felt pretty hopeless, but wasn't going to let it show....We went to Walmart and got some warm socks and a pair of Zippo Hand Warmers....because that was what the Red army mountain troops stationed in the Caucasus during ww2 had as their only consistent source of heat ....if it was good enough for them.... we had a couple of days of just battling the elements and fighting to stay warm.*

*At our storage space last night we were able to set up our Car-Vee more adequately to withstand the brutal cold.... then at the all-night laundromat in Richfield that has a strong wi-fi signal, we were able to come up with ideas of what we wanted to pursue moving forward.... we got to sleep some time around 4am. We woke up this morning in the back of the car to bright sun and our black siamese cat Toby bounding around the car, talking to us, playing with our hair and wanting to be fed. And It was wonderful, we ate breakfast in bed and then got on our way to the coffee shop to get wifi and coffee and to get some work done.*

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*To answer your second question - Am I okay?  
Objectively, No. I'm not okay. But I'm not beat either.*

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*And your third question- what's next?*

*I miss building and working on microphones and instruments, I've had a lot of new ideas brewing. I've had to start over from zero a few times before. And my girlfriend has been doing a lot of work on how we get a space to get started,*

*reforming my business as an LLC, getting investments, and how to do it bigger and better than before, instead of being a really good hustle and way to make money, doing it with the goal of being a legitimate, profitable, well run business.*

*---*

*Yeah, that's all I've got to say for now. How are things on the farm?*

*-Patrick*

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**Vince's Reply to me- Sent January 8, 2018**

*Patrick -*

*I am so sorry about what had happened.*

*May I share your email with Ted and Jon C at GCN - I believe that Jon C went to bat for you and that is why you were upstairs.*

*Vincent*

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**My Reply to Vince- Sent January 8, 2018**

*Vince, I really appreciate that. I'd need to think about it before you forward it to Ted and Jon.*

*Thank you.*

*-Patrick*

## **Tuesday, February 6, 2018**

Tight-Jawed. Tired. Restless.

It's 4AM and that cup of coffee I drank at 10 was not the greatest idea.

We're in an Emergency Shelter housed in a church gymnasium in West Saint Paul.

Snoring sounds like throaty sandpaper. It grates on my nerves. They all smoke and they're all getting sick.

## **Tuesday, February 27, 2018 - 3AM**

Another day and all-nighter of heavy fuckin' research. There was another one before that that bled into 2 all-nighters and then well needed sleep.

A cop visited the shelter 2 days in a row, Friday and Saturday night. I took notes and recorded. Notes from listening back:

*(0:33 ) Do you ever have people that do it by choice, just out of curiosity? Se we got this one guy ... he works at ... owns a minivan and has a generator on the back and he just lives out of his van, and um....you know it's his choice because he's renovated his van and he's got a job and that stuf and some day I'm just gonna stop him and just (0:52) not 'Stop Him' but just as I see him parked some place, just knock and chat (0:55) It'd just be interesting to get his take, like 'I'm saving for a house in 3 years... (4:36) ...Rumor has it there was an assault at the shelter...*

## **Thursday, March 1, 2018 - 10:45AM**

I woke up a little after 4AM in the main large sleeping area on the lower level of the church. I lay in bed (mat on the floor) for a few minutes and by 4:15-4:20, I was dressed and heading upstairs to check on Aiyana who was in the dining hall still working. As I walked out into the hallway and was approaching the steps, this guy me and Aiyana were talking with the past few nights who we have a raporte with asked me if I had a nice nap. I said "Yeah, it was pretty good."

"Your girl is upstairs," he told me.

"Yep."

"Your girl is upstairs."

"Yep."

"You should probably go see her," he said.

"Yep."

Then I took a left and quickly checked inside the men's restroom to see if the shower was going because I was interested in taking a shower but anxious and wanted to do it when no one was around....and I'm shy about asking for a towel....

I heard the shower running and saw light steam like you would expect coming through the doorway. I dipped back out and went up the stairs to the dining hall. I watched Aiyana's stuff while she went to the bathroom and when she came back, she told me about the night's work and we hung out and talked.

The fire alarm went off between 4:45 and 5 AM. I went out into the main area to see what was going on. Billy wasn't in

the office, I think he went downstairs. Slowly, the other shelter guests started coming up the steps.

We were instructed to go out in front into the parking lot. Me and Aiyana went out, I didn't have my coat or shoes. It was pretty cold. And we asked Billy if he would get Toby, he said he would.

4 squad cars showed up. 2 officers went with Billy into the church.

There was like a mob accusing this one Native dude of smoking in the bathroom and setting off the fire alarm, and he was saying he didn't. The Fire Marshall showed up in a white SUV, followed by a fire truck. Then we were let back in.

Then around 7:30, a cop was in the doorway of the main sleeping area as everyone was packing up, I saw him talking with the Native dude. Not sure what the cop was there to do. Me and Aiyana can't agree if he took the native guy or this other guy who'd come in drunk the night before.

## **Monday, March 19, 2018 9:25PM**

Today me and Aiyana went to the library. I finished a book I'd been reading. We'd talked a lot, then she went to work on the computers for awhile and I went to wander and look at books, highlights of that were an Emily Post Etiquette book, a bunch of cool books on tiny houses, a cool book on motifs, an idiot's guide to the saints. I forced myself to look in the biographies.

Aiyana found a heavy rabbit hole I'd do a bad job of describing.

Now I'm working on shit, making lists and shit....it will probably be a late night.

## **Tuesday, April 3, 2018**

Aiyana said this some time in the early morning hours:

*"We're about to drop of the radar for a while. There might be some things I could be thinking about, I could be making notes. Instead, I'm separating dog food and cat food because I don't have five dollars for cat food."*

## **Wednesday, April 11, 2018 -- 12:10AM**

At a truckstop in Inver Grove Heights. The lights, towers, and smoke from the Koch Refinery reminded Aiyana of *"Blade Runner."* The city dump is close by too. To the outside, square world, it looks like a place of decay and destitution, so for all practical purposes, it's a good spot to lay low and car camp in the parking lot.

Matrix Emergency Housing ended last Monday, Tuesday Morning. The staff seemed to be in self-congratulations mode, not really acknowledging this was going to be a devastating blow for most of us.

We'd met some people we liked and we traded info. I said to Aiyana as we were waiting for the car to warm up - *"All things considered, this has been the best roommate situation we've ever had."*

We tried camping at the Walmart in Apple Valley across from the church that Matrix ended at.

There had been a bad snowstorm the night before. We got questioned by a cop, it spooked me. It was a cold night and we were not used to camping in the car, it had been awhile.

The first night and day at the truck stop we mostly slept. We had an awesome conversation with a trucker named Don. It was too much to write here, but it was affirming, to say the least. Then we stayed up all night. I wrote. Then at 11, we went to Burnhaven Library, I kept writing, then came back to the truck stop, worked more and then slept.

Then Sunday night we went to a dinner at the Native American Episcopal Church in South Minneapolis. It was amazing. Then we came back and slept for a whole day.

Then today, I got up by 11, went to Westcott Library, I wrote some shit to maybe get general assistance.

## **Friday, April 20, 2018 -- 7:43 PM**

There was a horrendous late season snow storm last weekend that started some time on Friday and although it would stop periodically, the longest it ever let up was a few hours. We

spent the majority of Friday and Saturday doing our best to stay warm. There was no point in trying to do anything that required driving, we had no money and the gas tank was below a quarter tank. Running the engine every few hours to stay warm meant the low fuel warning light was lit up by Sunday afternoon.

I found some Holiday gas cards we had leftover from Matrix that had about \$5 between them that was exclusively for fuel and \$4 or \$5 that was a more general Holiday Gift Card. So Sunday Evening, \$5.29 went to fuel, a little over \$3 went towards two coffees, \$1.06 went to a Black and Mild Cigar.

My tires are worn out summer tires, driving in snowy weather or cold weather where there's ice on the road is ----frankly---- a bad idea if there's the choice not to. Sunday we needed a good meal, so we headed to the free meal at the Native American Episcopal Church in South Minneapolis. However, before we could go, I needed to shovel the car out.

There was a snow bank right in front of my car. The plow had been by, it was dumping out the side and left a massive snow bank behind it. I didn't have a shovel, so I asked our fellow car-dwelling neighbor to our right who had just cleared out the snow in front of his car if I could use his shovel. He handed me one of those dust pans attached to a handle. I took the handle off and was just using the bucket-like dust pan to scoop snow. -- -- yeah, it was going to take forever, but what else was I going to do? I got pissed at the snow and dug in, scooping and throwing as much as I reasonably could while



maintaining a good speed, only stopping every few minutes to stand up and rest my back for five to ten seconds.

After 20 minutes or so, our vandwelling neighbors parked to our left let me borrow their snow shovel as long as I gave it back and didn't borrow it out to anyone else. So I returned the handled dustpan to our other neighbors, who I helped a little while later to push their car, which turned out to still be stuck in the snow.

Shoveling went faster with a shovel. I was still pissed at the snow, so I kept up the momentum and aggression.

Then neighbor to the left, the other one, opened the van door and asked if I was looking for a job. I said that I might be. He told me his work was looking for people assembling trusses. It paid \$13 an hour and was from 6 AM - 2 PM, It's a union job, and the manager was understanding about homeless people and would be accommodating for good workers, because the temp workers he was getting were apparently worthless. Then he bummed me some cigarettes.

I shoveled until it was nearly done, a plow came by and picked up the last little bit. I gave the neighbors their shovel back. Mike told me more about the job, I got a number to call. I said I could call tuesday, I gave him my email and name and he said he'd call the boss and tell him. Dinner was awesome. Buffalo and Bean Soup, Really good salad. We got stuck on our way out and like four people from the church were outside and on top of it almost the moment I realized I was stuck.

Monday we went to the clinic so Aiyana could get her prescription. We tried to get lunch at

Waite House, it was closed because of the snow. I got stuck where I'd parked. I'd driven over a patch of snow, just deep enough for the underside of the car to get stuck. We had to get under to dig it out. I used my hands, Aiyana used a window scraper.

All the difficulties leading up to that, and then that, and having missed a dose of my antidepressant one of the days that weekend were starting to get to me. I got frustrated, sad, started feeling bad about myself, got close to yelling at Aiyana. Some of the things I said were hyperbolic and going in the direction of black and white thinking, negative, etc.

We got the car unstuck. I calmed down on the way to Target to get Aiyana's meds. While we waited, we got coffee with a gift card Aiyana had gotten at the clinic. We talked, it was refocusing, put things into perspective....like the feel of no shower in over two months having a

beard, having worn the same clothes for I don't know how long, my pants I've been wearing since before we left GCN. My hair, which is halfway down my back is matted, dreadlocked in many places....oh, and then frequent hunger, I have a molar where a crown came off 1-2 years ago, then something I was eating 2-3 months ago got stuck to it and chipped a chunk off, it's got a hole, it's been sensitive, it's the first tooth I've needed to get pulled. I'm afraid to get it pulled and afraid to put it off and get another abscessed tooth. I haven't had glasses since the drive back from Georgia. I don't have a phone (like a working phone- phone, with a sim card). My car, which is our home has a Georgia Plate, the tabs expire in June, the title is in my parents' name, my proof of insurance is expired....

....I'm okay, positive, upbeat most of the time. But I do need to remind myself that it's a lot to accept and endure....whatever....to not fall into despair or hate people....to stay on my purpose, keep a clear head....protect the deep love in my heart for other people....gratitude....to be hardened and disciplined in a life that has been war for a very, very long time.

Then we went to the library, I hit a stride writing, finally. I haven't hit in years. I've been writing like it's going to a job since January, nearly every day because I had to and there was nothing else I could do. I wasn't pushing myself to do it because it was a fun thing to do, I've been putting one foot in front of the other, increasing the durations I could take of solid time spent writing....and that's about it, I never had a shortage of things to write about. I'm not insecure or concerned about my abilities at this point....I struggle with staying on topic but that's been getting better, I challenge myself to say things as bluntly and transparent, and as directly as I can without sacrificing necessary details and information -- which is a struggle, but I value having it. I prefer it to be hard work and I prefer to take it seriously as I would a job. Jobs have moments that are fun, there are parts that are rewarding, but those aren't things worth having expectations about when you still have to go to work either way. You still have to do a good job. It's what you've been hired to do or you get fired. ....So I hit a stride on monday, then went back to the truck stop....and continued writing....

The following morning, we went to the library. I called my potential new boss and set up an interview for 9 the next morning and then I did some more writing.

Went back to the truck stop and slept.

Woke up, went to the interview. I got the job, just needed a social security card. Went to the library, worked on shit, wrote, got a pep talk from Mike when we got back to the truck stop about getting my social security card and what to say to them....it helped.

Thursday was much of the same routine....

Today, we woke up, went to the Social Security Administration Office, got coffee on the way at the bank. Got a receipt for the card, should get it in two weeks, went to the library, emailed the boss, asked if that'd work. I made some notes longhand in a back corner, then got dinner at Creekside Community Center and then came back to the truckstop which is where I am now.

Also, I wrote Smokeless Smoking a really long email where I asked for a new ecig and some eliquid, they gave me a new Aspire Breeze, 3 bottles of Blackbird, 2 503 T-shirts, 2 hats, girl scout cookies. I hugged all of them, it was amazing.

## **Tuesday, April 24, 2018**

I had a brother who died six years before I was born. He was only alive for 72 days. His Headstone is in The Independent Hebrew Cemetery in Norwalk, CT. It has his name: Jonas Levi

Callan; the dates he was alive: September 19, 1980 – December 1, 1980; and then a simple line drawing of a Dove. I saw it once in person, it was 1996 or 1997 following the memorial service where my grandfather's ashes were put to rest in the same cemetery. Myself, my mother and father, and one or both of my sisters started walking in that direction and I was told we were going to Jonas's grave. It was the first time I observed the Jewish ritual of putting small stones on top of the headstone of a loved one. I don't remember much more of it than that.

This past winter, I found a photo of it online. I took a screenshot and saved it on my phone. It was my background and lock screen for a little over a week. I liked having it. To look at it gives me a feeling of peace that I cannot find the words to describe. It's real. It's evidence that he was a person who lived and died and that's the physical marker on the earth of where his physical remains are buried.

His death was superimposed upon my life, that I had a brother who died in infancy. He was talked about often as though he was still alive and (actively) part of the family and never went anywhere. There were implications I did not understand and a significance and association attached to him being my parents' son who had died before I was born. His death was hung up like the prelude to my life and the shadow of death that was hung on me and my life – and my death.... and my parents' fears, anxiety, or anticipation surrounding something just as unknown

and individual as anyone else's death, somewhere in their future.

It's very strange, I know he died while still a baby and years before I was born; but I have visual memories of him, I can clearly see in my mind's eye what he would look like at different stages in his life – a life that he never had. And although the memories are very real, actual memories that I have, they are not based on a physical reality that ever happened.

One time, I must have been about 5 years old, I asked my mom if they had me to replace Jonas.

She said “No,” but it was obvious to me, even then that there was more to it than that. I was filling some kind of spot in the family that was his first.

I don't know what details surrounding his death (that I've been told) are true and what's not.

It's taken me a few months of thinking hard on the subject, and a few very important, revealing conversations with my partner, to feel ready or comfortable enough to commit this much about it to writing.

## **Tuesday, May 1, 2018 -- 4 AM**

I started a new job last Wednesday building roof and floor trusses. It's physically demanding. After work, I sit in the car for about an hour, my arms aching, and I power nap. Me and Aiyana got to take a shower for the first time in 2 months. It feels amazing being able to clean off.

I got a message from a friend on Facebook that my father was trying to find me. It makes me mad. I survived an MN Winter being Homeless....after he made me homeless. Fuck him. He has no right to talk to me.

## **Sunday, May 20, 2018**

After the ordeal, all our stuff, the auction closed one day before I got paid. I got my paycheck in hopes of saving our stuff. The person who bought the contents of our storage unit showed up before me -- -- after that, they "*Requested*" that our personal items be left and we'd be allowed to pick them up.

Because of my work schedule, I wasn't able to check my email until Monday after work at the library. They'd already sent their notice that if they didn't hear from me by 6PM that day my shit would be disposed of. So I messaged them planning to do it the following day. So Tuesday, After work, at the library, I looked up the cost of renting a van. I found out I couldn't get one without a credit card. I asked storage if I could pay a fee for them to hold my stuff until Friday. They said "*no.*" Wednesday was the latest.

Wednesday, after work, me and Aiyana stopped to get slushies at the gas station and then headed to Minneapolis. We tried to get a storage unit at Public Storage, right down the street, they sometimes have \$1 deals. Not this time. So we headed to the storage place.

I was going to ask if they'd hold my stuff until friday, if they said *"No,"*

We decided to unload the car on the loading dock, get the stuff in our storage unit, then repack the car. That part went as expected and I drove around to the front entrance and was let in the gate. When I got to the unit, it was locked, so I had to go to the office and ask them to unlock it. Ann said she'd unlock it. She got up, and had some flirty exchange with John, the manager. She unlocked it. Left me alone, I went in.

It was a relief to see among the remains of our belongings my boxes of master cassette tapes, one box of my original music, a crate of sketchbooks, notebooks, and paintings, the box of my master copies of my zines. I took 3 or 4 boxes, just what was first in line and looked important enough, I put them in the trunk and was walking back to the unit before I was stopped by John and Ann.

*"Patrick. Is that your stuff at the side of the building?"*

*"Yeah."*

John looked panicked and furious. *"Okay, you need to get that stuff off the property now."*

*"Okay."* I nodded.

*"No--like now. Not thirty seconds, now or I'm calling the police."*

*"Okay."*

I changed directions and started walking to my car.

Ann said as I was walking away- *"It looks like a train wreck."*



I didn't respond. I drove to the exit, they opened it. I explained the situation to Aiyana, we packed the car. I noticed they told me 10 minutes before they office closed. We put all the shit back in the car. There wasn't room for Aiyana, she was going to meet me down the street and I was gonna ask if I could get back in. I did the block, then a u-turn on 55 and drove up to the front office, the door was locked and the lights were off and no one was there. I had the feeling not to linger because they were probably hoping they'd be able to call the cops on me anyways.

So I drove to where Alyana weas. We reassembled the car in front of an apartment complex.

## **Monday, May 7, 2018**

At 3am, an Edina Police Officer knocked on our car window in the parking lot of a 24 hour Walgreens. I was in a heavy sleep, I'd been working long hours every day at my new job and had just gone to the ER for foot pain, sores and what looked like an infection with open sores, redness and blisters....and my legs were so sore it was hard to walk. We went to the walgreens to get the Prescription Antifungal Cream, I needed rest and to not use my feet or wear shoes at all....

In that moment, I did feel caught off guard in a way I have never felt when woken up by police while sleeping in my car. It's a fairly normal occurrence that will happen at some point if you are

sleeping in your car enough. I'd say it's something I'm usually prepared for and that I know what to expect and how to handle it. It usually isn't even all that threatening or uncomfortable.

There was a coldness in his demeanor and a detachment that cemented after we had answered in the affirmative when he asked the question *"Are you homeless?"*

As I was becoming more coherent, the first recollections I have are of Aiyana explaining I'd had to go to the ER and was here picking up medicine they had prescribed and that we were napping, I had to be at work at 6am.

He asked where or what my job was. I said I was building floor and roof trusses, then not thinking about it, I was spelling out how I thought the name of the company was spelled.

He asked to see our ID's. I couldn't find my wallet or remember where I put it.

Then I heard him ask *"What's that....Is that a sword?"* Then I saw his flashlight angled down from the top of the window, down the side of the car door, he was looking at my work hammer. I responded *"No. It's a hammer."* I then pulled it out to show him.

Aiyana added *"He needs it for work."*

I then said something to the effect of "Oh....I guess I probably shouldn't have just pulled it out so quickly like that. "

He responded *"Yeah....probably not the best...."*

I then admitted I was having trouble finding my wallet. He said he would run Aiyana's expired ID, he also took down my name and Date of Birth.

I managed to find my wallet before he came back. He Ran It. It was weird he took down my name and DOB as though that would ever fill in the need for a driver's license....while presumably driving a car....or sleeping in a car, clear that you drive, you'll be the one driving....

He then told me he wanted to talk to me outside the car. I said "*Sure.*" I just needed to put on my shoes. Putting on my shoes was fucked up, bungled by pain, anxiety and fear. I stumbled, tripped a little while exiting. I was doing my very best to show him my hands and move predictably and slowly.

He asked who owned the car and if I owned the car.

I explained I owned it, however the title is in my parents' name.

He asked, motioning to Aiyana "Are you two together?"

I said "*Yes.*"

He asked about the Lino Lakes address on my driver's license. I told him it was an old address, it was my parents' address before they moved to Georgia. He asked in regards to the GA plates, how long I had been in Minnesota. I said 1 year, adding that I was aware it was well beyond the 30 days a person is expected to get MN plates when moving from another state. At first he sounded confused by my mention of that, but then he got it.

His story was that he'd seen our car while driving by and decided to take a closer look. He said I should probably move because the store might call the police and they'd have to come and tell us we needed to go. He recommended better places, like truck stops.

He said he would hate for us to become "*Victims of a Crime.*"

He then said something vague and detached about us being homeless and he hopes that it gets better and it's something we're willing to work on and we're able to get back on our feet. Then he let me go.

## **Thursday, May 24, 2018**

I got weirdly pulled over earlier in the week by a very greenhorn cop. Aiyana had needed to go to the Dakota County Service Center to check on her health insurance. I took a nap. She didn't take very long, but when she was done, she let me continue to rest. The security guard, who was a real cop, knocked on the window and asked if I was okay, I vaguely remember it. While we were leaving and I was making my way to the highway, I realized I was being followed by a cop, so I was mostly driving with my eyes on the rear view mirror. 2 times, I could have turned right on red, I didn't.

When I got pulled over, his story didn't add up. He gave me a sobriety test and was sneaky about snooping around our car. At one point he asked if I was having problems with my eyes. I was, but I said "*no.*" I've been having problems keeping my eyes open while at work and driving.

## **Wednesday, June 27, 2018 -- 2:25AM**

My 2001 Toyota Echo died at Lebanon Hills County Park on June 17th ( *"Father's Day"* ). We knew it was going to die, the night before, we had spent 8 hours at Walmart deciding on the best throw-away phones (presumably to communicate with potential sellers of our new used car/home). After that, the Echo took the longest, most tries it had ever taken to start up; and on the drive over to the campground, there was a loud, metallic "*KAH-THUNK!*" and then the grinding of worn out breaks that had been that way for several weeks got dramatically worse.

Steering was difficult and by the time we got to the driveway to the campground, I pressed the brakes....it stuck and stayed depressed and there was no response from the brakes....the car didn't slow down....

I checked in at the office. I left the car running and had asked Aiyana to remind me every few seconds (or every time I was about to do anything like park, get out of the car, take off my seatbelt, etc) not to turn off the car. I got our campsite, paid for 4 nights, and was able to play it cool with the friendly manager and his wife about my death-rattling car sitting right outside.

When we got to our campsite, I backed into the parking space but left it right at the edge of the road, anticipating that we might need to push it out.

We made camp leisurely and joyfully. We'd finally made it. After so many weeks of living in

public and constantly being questioned by police, we had a camp site and got to be left alone among trees to set up our tent and just be for a little while. By evening it had begun raining off and on, by sunset it was pouring heavily with little interruption....it would stay like that for the next 3 days.

We had planned on getting the camp site and then going to get food. All I had picked up at the Walmart before we left was a jar of olives, potato salad, almond and cranberry chicken salad, and 6 mangos.

The plan (cuz I still needed to go to work the next morning) was to set up the phones and then I'd take a taxi or an uber and then talk to my coworkers to see if anyone could give me a ride to and from work until Thursday, when we get paid.... and then me and Aiyana would have enough saved up to get a new vehicle.

But we needed a landline to set up the phones, which we didn't find out until 11PM or so. The camp office had a landline, but they were closed and wouldn't open until 9AM.

It continued to rain. We continued to sleep....

We were so sleep deprived, I was working 9.5 hour days, 6 days a week (Mandatory. Which can be brutal, but the steady money was helping, so I just hung in there) and we had been sleeping in the car at night for months, which was cramped, uncomfortable, and we always had to be preoccupied with stealth, appearances, and the stress that comes with getting stopped and

questioned by the police on an almost daily basis and everyone seeming to have such inhumane apprehensions about people sleeping in a car, it seems to really upset them. Being on the receiving end of such odd attitudes and behaviors is enough to drive a person insane. I was genuinely concerned I was developing symptoms of narcolepsy. It got really scary....the inopportune times where my eyes felt hot and were deciding they could no longer stay open and my body would begin to go limp without my conscious mind having any say in what's happening....I had to fight it and bargain with myself and combat it with all my strength at the worst times ....like driving in rush hour traffic on 494.... or operating the roller at work (a several ton industrial, ride-on roller machine that flattens the metal plates onto roof and floor tresses). The hell of externally imposed sleep deprivation that Aiyana went through was just as bad, if not worse (in my opinion), but I'll let her describe that herself when and if she wants to....

Some time in the early afternoon on monday, we got up. I went to the camp ground office. I bought ice cream bars, chips, sodas, candy bars....basically the best variety I could bring back to camp within the narrow range of what little food items they had. I also tried to set up the phones and I failed. Aiyana was able to get the phones set up by late Tuesday night; at which time I sent a quick email to my boss to let him know what was going on:

***[Subject: Car Died, Haven't been able to get to work.]***

*Chris ,*

*I wasn't able to get to work the past two days. My car died at the Lebanon hills campground on Sunday. The starter had been having trouble and the brakes were going, but I*

*had been thinking it could make it until my next paycheck.*

*I just now got my new phone set up and working. the  
number is ### - ### - ###*

*I'm not really sure what I'm going to do at the moment to  
solve the problem. But I wanted to*

*send you a message as soon as I could to let you know  
what's up. I'd really like to keep my job.*

*I'm going to try to div something out as soon as humanly  
possible so I don't need to miss any  
more work...*

*-Patrick*

Wednesday, I walked 1.5 miles to the Walgreens for my  
Anti-Depressants and to the Cub Foods  
for some groceries.

Thursday, I took a cab to my work to pick up my  
paycheck....and with any luck (Aiyana had  
gotten in touch with a lady selling a van we liked on  
craigslist, seemed legit, and everything was  
good to go if I could get over to that part of St. Paul by cab)  
go buy a van. My paycheck wasn't  
there and the night crew didn't know where the day crew  
kept their paychecks....

Friday, I was waiting on a cab to do the same thing I'd done  
the previous day, but assuming I'd  
have better luck if I showed up during the day shift. I called  
my boss' cell phone....and he let me  
know he had mailed it out....The address I had given was the  
opportunity center in Minneapolis,  
a catholic charities homeless outreach place that I was in  
theory able to receive mail.

(I'll write the rest in a little while.... I really don't like thinking  
about it)



## **Sunday, July 1, 2018 - 6:37AM**

He said *"Ah, Long Lost Patrick.... We had kinda written you off, so we mailed your paycheck out."*

I freaked out while on the phone with him, saying *"Fuck.Fuck.Fuck"* an awful lot. He told me as we were getting off the phone either to stay in touch, or keep him posted, or something like that....

I walked back to the side of the road in the campground, and the dead car, pushed off to the side, and a patch of grass we could hang out on until 10pm, but we no longer had a campsite, and they were all booked for the night .... so our presence and the vibe of the whole thing was now a different thing entirely. I explained the situation to Aiyana and we did our best to begin thinking of alternate plans....It felt really fucking bleak. We waited, we called the shop that had worked on the starter back in November....they gave us the same tips everyone gives for a starter that isn't working....try tapping on the solenoid, maybe get a jump start--you might have worn down the battery from trying so many times....

I tried starting it in vain, cycling the key (which had worked all the previous times until it didn't....), tapping on the starter and the solenoid, different variations of totally unrelated things I had remembered I had done at different times that may or may not have had anything to do with the thing starting. I tried all afternoon. I kept telling myself and telling Aiyana "It's going to

start eventually," and "I'm going to get it started." Camp staff came by to give us a jump start but nothing happened.

Aiyana eventually had to insist I stop trying. it wasn't going to start, and even if it does, the brakes are gone, it's no longer safe to drive, and even if we can get it to some place, what do we do then? It was dead.

I cried my fucking eyes out. Not because I was sad my car died and I'd loved that car, I'd had so many adventures and trips in it....and then managed to modify it and put a bed in the back and live in it for over a year, surviving a Minnesota Winter with my girlfriend and our cat ....I cried because it was the loss of a home, transportation .... the minimal security and stability that me and Aiyana and our cat Toby really, really needed and were depending upon .... and to push through this next chunk of time before some similar stability and security could be recovered .... was more than I could comprehend.

I cried and the two things I kept repeating were *"Where do they expect us to go?"* and *"What are we supposed to do now?"* When I was all cried out, I didn't feel much better, it was just time to proceed.

Having each other was still everything, I knew that.... but it was still very hard. She hugged me and talked me through it, in the way only she can, which is comforting, but real....not ignoring that shit was hard, but that we are strong, and there was reason to be optimistic and not lose hope.

We packed our backpacks with the bare essentials, a delicate balance of what we couldn't afford to lose (like notebooks, journals, etc.---most important among the other things we couldn't

afford to lose if this was the last chance we had to get our stuff from the car), what we would need to stay warm, dry, healthy....and what we could carry....which was very little. I carried Toby in a sling, like someone might carry a baby in a sling in front of them, Aiyana carried his folded up carrier.

We took off on foot, then took a cab to the 24 hour Walmart in Apple Valley. That was the first night we spent sleeping on the park benches in front of the Denny's, somewhat hidden from traffic on 42 by some bushes. That night, the sprinklers came on for awhile and then would go off for awhile, harassing us in varying ways throughout the night....sometime around 4AM, one would come around every minute or so and spray both of us right in the mouth....we'd put the blanket up over our faces, but would doze off again, the blanket would shift and eventually we'd get sprayed in the face again and get woken up. Toby whined, cried, clawed at his carrier all night. I would sit on the ground beside him and slip my hand in through the zipper to pet him and calm him down with some success....he'd be okay for awhile and I'd begin to relax or drift off, but he'd need me to comfort him again.

It was a hard night. Being homeless, it's always easier to sleep during the day. We got some sleep when the sun had come up. It had been freezing all night, but by 7 or 8, it had warmed up and was quite comfortable. We no longer had to be huddled together for warmth and Toby had relaxed and I moved over to the other bench that was about 20 feet away and lay down and actually get a decent nap in.

I was woken up by a Police Officer standing over Aiyana talking to her, as soon as I noticed what was going on, I got up and walked over.

He said someone had called and thought we might "*need some help.*" Aiyana explained something about car trouble, I don't actually know what she told him about our situation.

He kept calling her "*dear,*" in an unnatural, robotic way....placed at the ends of his assorted statements....

I went into the store after that to get some snack cakes. We ate some and talked for a bit before I took off to walk to the Uhaul on 42 and Galaxie to see about renting a van so we could go

retrieve our stuff from the Echo before it got towed. I was nervous I wouldn't be able to rent any van or truck because I don't have a credit card. I was nervous during the interaction with the U Haul Store Manager who was assisting me, that if she got some idea that I was homeless, or if it accidentally slipped out of my mouth, the reason why I needed to rent a truck or van....there would be no way....BUT, much to my surprise, with a \$100 cash deposit I was able to rent a 15 foot moving truck and I would be able to pick it up at 4PM.

I started getting really sad and felt like I was going to cry again as I was walking back. Aiyana messaged me while I was walking to let me know that the lady who we were going to buy the van from the other day still had it, we might still be able to buy it once I get my paycheck....I started wondering if putting energy and money into retrieving our stuff from the Echo would be energy and money that we would not be able to put towards the next goal....transportation to get my check, and then getting

another vehicle....which looked like such an impossible task at that moment....

We slept on a blanket on the dirty grass by the walmart and denny's parking lot, not giving a fuck how homeless we obviously looked. At 3, I went to pick up the truck. It felt good to pick up Aiyana and Toby in it. We got chinese food for dinner and proceeded to the campground and the task at hand.

We got to the Echo and parked in front of it on the minimal shoulder of the narrow dirt road and began taking our stuff out and loading it into the back of the moving truck.

The Echo had been our home for over a year. It was filthy in a way that up until this moment we were unable to fully grasp, we were never able to just take everything out and take a good, honest look at it.

There was mold on all the carpeting, which seemed to have never fully dried after the winter.

Toby's kitty box had been placed in front of the passenger seat (which we hadn't used since the fall and had made two serious attempts to remove entirely), There had been a sheet of Coroplast that covered the kitty box "area" that rested between the glove compartment and the seat. At this point in time, the passenger seat was home to 2 stacked milk crates and one shallow cardboard box of our growing book collection, which took a great deal of ongoing considerations to make sure remained dry and clean, free of debris, dirt, and cat hair. Usually there was a blanket on the top box of books, that served as Toby's "perch." We did our very best to keep the kitty litter box area as clean as we were able under all of the different

circumstances but after a year....you can imagine it was in quite a state....

I won't go into greater detail about the level of dirty the interior was. Me and Aiyana are both uniquely tidy and organized people. By nature, we organize the spaces we occupy for optimum utility, ergonomics, workflow, etc. within the limitations we are presented with. The necessity to turn a Toyota Echo into an improvised 4 Season Motorhome (or what we sometimes called a "Car-Vee") was a unique project for us to undertake. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone unless they have to, I don't think it can be done well.

Problems with stealth, humidity, space, health, and safety are unavoidable with no good way to adequately address or ever really solve. In my opinion, it's sacrificing a functional car for survival....the success of the undertaking should only be measured in terms of the survival of the people and animals who have to use it, nothing more.... we were able to make it work for a little over a year, but that was a surprise. And although multiple mechanical failures that we were unable to fix were the reason we had to abandon it, health and well being would have been just as legitimate a reason. My point is, no one should ever have to live like this, the state we had to abandon the vehicle in speaks to that, but I'm sure anyone who observed the interior.... maybe while towing, maybe at the impound lot would assume a depravity, mental instability, or more generally that there was something wrong

with the individuals involved.... ***[...that's the thing that always blows my mind about people's attitudes towards homeless people, homeless people's attitudes towards themselves, and their attitudes towards one another....it seems we've been programmed to focus on the individual instead of the (almost always) much more relevant circumstances in which they found themselves, and***

***the failure of a society to recognize it's role in actively doing this to people with mostly counter-intuitive, deceptive, and cruel methods and organizations dedicated to making sure there are always people thrown under the bus, about to be thrown under the bus, afraid of and trying not to be thrown under the bus, and of course .... those doing the throwing, some getting paid to do it, some because they don't know any better, and some because they want to. ....I'm generalizing, of course.... but I do not think the above analogy, assessment of the situation is inaccurate or hyperbolic. The reality is by far much worse and far too complex to get into here....]***

I was reminded that most of the money I'd made at GCN had gone into modifying the car to survive the winter. We had done so much research and work to make that tiny car do what we needed it to do, by the end it had given us everything it had to give and kept going until it was dead. All we were leaving behind was it's filthy shell.

There was a warning left on the windshield by the Sheriff. It had Susan's name and address on it. She didn't want to sign over the title to me....her reasons never added up, it was about control. In the year since I'd gone no contact, it'd been a major vulnerability and source of stress and concern. The car was going to be towed to the impound lot if it was not moved within a narrow window of time. It seemed like an appropriate end.

One of the guys working at the park came by on his All-Terrain Golf Cart to talk to us....I let Aiyana do most of the talking, I was a little too raw right then to know how open and transparent

it was appropriate to be. She did a great job. The guy was a warm, good soul and his presence was very comforting in the moment. He offered us a campsite for the night, someone had gotten it but decided to go by 8-9 PM....which seems odd, but he said it happens frequently on weekends....since the sites are already paid for, if they're able to offer them to someone, it's always free of charge. We gratefully accepted. It was so amazing and unexpected.

When we were done taking our belongings and all reusable materials out of the Echo, we went to our campsite, set up the tent and watched the fireflies outside before falling asleep.

We woke up the next morning around 9AM. Aiyana was in pain, so she sat in the truck while I took down the tent and packed up. We left the camp ground and went to get some food.

The plan up to this point was to call U Haul and say that we needed the truck for another day, then we'd also use it to get my paycheck in Minneapolis and have a place to stay at night for Sunday and Monday Night. I didn't reserve it for more than a single 24 hour block initially was because I didn't have that much money on me, but if I had it long enough to get my check, I'd more than be able to cover the cost when we returned it.

I called after we ate, the dude told me that it was a *"No Can Do..."* because he had already promised it to a family who was coming to pick it up at 4PM. There really wasn't much room for arguing with him....Once again, shit felt kinda hopeless....but what choice did we have except to just keep trudging forward.



We stopped by the Pawn Shop, I sold a Shure SM-58 Microphone that I'd managed to find at a thrift store for \$15. They gave me \$30....under better circumstances, I could have sold it on craigslist for \$75-\$80....but I was satisfied that I had at least doubled my money and had 30 more dollars than I would have otherwise, whatever lay in store for us in the next few days wasn't going to be easy, but any money we had was going to be needed to make the difference between a positive outcome and being stuck and destitute for an unknowable period of time....

We showed up at the U haul 2 hours early so we could set up a storage unit and have enough time to unload the truck. We turned over the keys a little after 4PM and then hung out at the unit for awhile organizing and determining what went with us that we'd carry in our backpacks and what would have to stay in the unit. It was hard. We left some time in the evening, it was threatening to rain, otherwise we probably would have just relaxed and hung out in the grass for awhile longer. We walked to the 24 hour Apple Valley Walmart. Aiyana had a tough time walking because of the pain, I did my best to be encouraging and tell her she was doing a great job, and it had been the reason why I'd implored her to pack as light as possible and had overpacked my own backpack to include equal space for Aiyana's stuff....what I would have ideally preferred under the circumstances would have been just the one backpack, but that was truthfully unrealistic.

I carried Toby, holding him in my arms with the sling helping with his weight. He's a big,

muscular cat. A person feels it if they have to carry him any distance. He had his claws dug deep into my arms the whole way. The traffic on 42 frightened him, at least one loud-ass muscle car roared by and one ambulance displaced traffic and wedged its way through with sirens blaring.

Toby squirmed and was trying to see everything in every direction and seemed compelled to move in every different direction....I managed to keep him calm enough, he trusts me and I was definitely grateful for that. It was a walk I would have never chosen to make with a cat in my arms if I didn't have to. I had to focus on my breath and my surroundings, stay in the moment, and anticipate Toby's impulses and reactions in order to keep him safe and I was determined to keep pace with Aiyana and not rush her. It wasn't easy, but we made it to the Walmart. My arms burned by the end and we were all relieved to have arrived without incident.

We ate and then went to the lawn furniture to relax. We were both doing our best to pretend we were not dozing off for minutes at a time, then we'd wake up just long enough to pretend we were having a conversation. This went on for a little over an hour before the store manager "Mr.

10 and 2" came over to tell us he couldn't have us sleeping in the store. We said we weren't, "we hadn't been planning on it...." but he still was gonna be a dick about it so he pointed to our cart, overflowing with 2 backpacks, oversized pop up cat carrier with sleeping cat inside and kitty box in black garbage bag down below....and said "Cuz it looks like you're sorta....camped out..."

After 10 and 2 left, we decided to leave. We headed over to a hiding spot that I'd scouted out a couple nights before. It was a fenced off gravel area in front of Grace Lutheran Church. It was

where the HVAC and stuff for the electric and gas was. It was a good hiding spot with relative privacy and there was very little reason for anyone to go back there....It was however located close to a busy intersection, and being across 42 from a Walmart, it was a hub for chaos and anxious activity, at least once or twice a night as a result of too many police patrolling the area, eager for action....even if they had to make something out of absolutely nothing....and then there would be the occasional loud-drama or otherwise boisterous, bizzare, and sometimes frightening behaviors of wandering meth-heads....oh, also suburban people and a "see something, say something" attitude that I really can't get my head around, I always seem to forget those people are out there until I encounter one and then I'm reminded.

At some point in the night there was a traffic stop, the lights reflecting on the wall, the sound of police talking to one another and loudly questioning the person they pulled over woke me up and freaked me out....before I understood what was happening, I thought they were coming to get us in our hiding spot and "oh, shit. shit. " had already come out of my mouth. Aiyana got me to quiet down .... I eventually fell back asleep into a very light, still on alert, type of sleep.

We awoke to some light rain around 6am, we decided it was a good time to leave our spot before it got later and busier. A little less than an hour after that we hopped the express bus to Minneapolis in hopes of picking up my paycheck and going to buy a van.

My focus was mainly on carrying Toby. Aiyana basically had to guide me. Toby's pop-up carrier

was so damn clumsy and isn't really designed to be a "Cat Carrier." Toby's a big, heavy cat but he only takes up a tiny portion of the carrier, it's more like carrying a cat in a big awkward pop-up laundry basket.

Walking through downtown was difficult. We took a moment to rest on a patch of grass by St.

Olaf. I thought it was funny how quickly a security guard came out to tell us "Hey, I really can't have you sitting on the grass here....it's for the church...."

Fine. We got up to go, just as pleasant and cooperative as we always are with people being so weird, particular, and freaked out by homeless people resting. He was able to tell us where we could catch the 5, which was cool. Everything in Minneapolis is under construction, it's difficult to tell where to catch buses.

Then we took the 5 to the Opportunity Center. We checked in. I asked about mail, it hadn't come yet. So we sat in the big main room, it's a bit like a cafeteria, which is one of it's functions. It didn't feel weird being there....which it has in the past. We were surrounded by people in a similar situation, the most noticeable thing that we all had in common was that when you're homeless, people make it fucking impossible to sleep, like they fucking hate letting a person get some rest. So the most common activity at the Opportunity Center that morning was sleeping-- in the chairs, arms folded on the table in front of them as a pillow.

There was a notably gorgeous, very tall Transgender Woman there....which I count as a positive

of the experience, the rest of which being neutral. There was a lady working there who was a staff member at Matrix, it was nice seeing her too.

We napped and I periodically went to the front desk to check to see if the mail had come. We woke up at lunch time....so groggy. We got in line at the point 75 and older people were called to get in line. Then they called for everyone. A woman said to me *"I'm 55, can I get ahead of you?"* and I said *"Yeah, absolutely."*

Lunch was chicken, cauliflower, bean soup, and some kind of desert, all served on well used and scuffed up retired school lunch trays. I gave my soup to Aiyana. The Cauliflower was green, kinda freaky, not sure it was Cauliflower, but there was one tasty bite that was the taste of Cauliflower. The Chicken was fine, but due to the context, and it's tray-mate other food items....I couldn't help but be wary of every bite. The desert was some nondescript chocolate with green frosting chunk, blob thing.

Then they began shuffling us out onto the sidewalk in order to get the next group in for lunch. On the way out, the security guard stopped me *"Hey Buddy...Buddy...."*

I turned around, *"Yeah?"*

*"Next time don't bring the cat."*

*"Okay."* I said and I resumed the group shuffle out onto the sidewalk. Then we had to walk back around and re-enter. We hung out in the court yard where we continued to nap. We had to explain to the security guard as he came back around that I was just waiting for the mail and he said he would leave me alone about the cat until then.

The mail finally came around 1:30. My paycheck hadn't come.

Fuck.

We left. Hopped the 5 too early to the spot on Marquette we needed to catch our bus back to Apple Valley. I went to the Jimmy Johns around the corner to get a couple of sodas and break one of our bigger bills for \$1 bills.

On the way, I passed an abandoned hobo cart someone had put a lot of time, resources and energy into. There was a Trunk, a Big unfurled umbrella, a lot of padding stuff, like egg crate foam mattress toppers and camping sleeping pads for sleeping comfortably on the ground.

We hopped a bus that took us to Palomino. There was a park across the street. We napped in the grass on the hillside. It was a couple of hours before our next bus came. When we got back to the walmart, we took a shopping cart, loaded our stuff into it and walked to the park down the street. We put our tarp on the ground and put our blanket over us. We slept until 10PM.

When the park closed, we spent the night on a park bench in front of the walmart. It was brutal. With our minimal supplies, we kept each other warm enough. It rained. We got wet.

After the sun came up, we relocated to a different bench. A woman came by around 7 and gave us Mcdonald's Hot Cakes and Coffee. Then like 2 hours later, a woman came by and gave us 2 full bags of groceries and even food for Toby. When she was talking, it seemed she had to cut herself off, she was talking to her memories of what she'd been through that made her relate to us....it was incredibly touching and amazing....then like 20 minutes later, another lady came by

and said she saw us and saw our cat and wanted to help and gave us 2 more bags of groceries!

After that we felt compelled to get up and begin our day. I tried to get my meds filled at the Walmart, but they couldn't access my insurance info so I walked to the Walgreens up the street.

The pharmacy tech was like a girl I would have been friends with when I was 18 or 19 at community college or something. She made me laugh, we talked about tattoos. She had some amazing Chicago themed tattoos that were starting to form a sleeve.

Then I walked back. Aiyana went to hang out in the Subway and I went to hop my bus to Minneapolis to check the mail again at the opportunity center.

When I got there, it had come! It was \$680! Enough to get the van we wanted + eighty dollars! I texted Aiyana and she texted the lady we'd been talking to about the van. I left the opportunity center and hopped the 5 to the Wells Fargo in Downtown to cash my paycheck. When I was leaving Wells Fargo, Aiyana told me that the lady had sold the van....so I shouldn't head to St. Paul, and not to be sad. I wasn't.

I hopped the bus back to Apple Valley. I genuinely felt pretty good. I met Aiyana at the Subway. I suppose to some extent I pushed my optimism on her--we went through 6 overpriced Starbucks mocha energy coffee drinks and scrolled through the cars for sale on Craigslist. The idea was to just keep looking and keep messaging people until we had a car---cuz that was way better than

continuing to sleep outside.

One we sent a message about was a Ford Explorer, we got the guy to lower the price. But after I tried to get him to drive from Chaska to Apple Valley that night, conversation dropped off.

The other one was a Dodge Caravan. The guy was available to meet the following day. There were lapses in the time between messages that made us nervous, but it worked out, and that's the car we got.

We hung out at Denny's all night, then began hopping busses around 7AM. We met the guy over in NorthEast Minneapolis. The van was not without its flaws and anomalous behaviors, but for \$500, it was our ideal, and the guy was the ideal guy to be buying a used car from.

Then we moved in.

Shortly thereafter, I messaged my boss, told him I fixed my transportation situation and would like to resume work.

He told me to come see him, we agreed to meet at 9AM the following day to fill out forms.

## **Monday, July 9, 2018 2:28PM**

In fifteen days, I'll turn 32 years old. For the first 29 years of my life, everything was one way, then the last 2, I knew that it had always been something very very different.



Aside from the nerve damage in my hands, I don't mind my job. There is something about manual labor that agrees with me. I've gotten physically stronger and lost a lot of weight. The switch to the night shift has been good. It's more relaxed. The foreman is a decent guy. The only thing that was relaxed about the day shift was working with Chino, it was relaxed because we worked so hard and once I learned what to expect and could keep up, I had his respect and he liked me.

Other people I'd work with, we'd have a good day working together, we'd get along, and then Chris would let me know they had been complaining about how I don't shower or wear deoderant. Seemed I had to keep an eye on the white guys, lazy, but competitive, and mad shit talkers.

So I like the night shift, I've mostly been working with this black guy from chicago. He's hard working and relieved I am too. And he's a friendly, nice guy. I opened up to him the other day more than I would have liked, but it seems fine. It was reciprocal, he opened up to me Saturday when he told me his little cousin got shot....

Yeah, so I'll be 32 in fifteen days. I've passed the one year mark being estranged from my family.

## **Afterwards:**

These journals conclude in July of 2018. I developed carpal tunnel from swinging a hammer and using a pneumatic staple gun all day, 6 days a week. I was unable to write longhand or type for any prolonged duration without my hand going numb and having to take a break. I wrote a lot less but I needed the job and eventually grew to love it and do well. A new foreman came in towards the end of the summer, he picked up on my ability and eagerness to learn new things and then teach them to others, so I got quickly promoted and was primarily tasked with teaching new people, I would also fill in on any number of tasks when people were missing.

What started out as the most physically demanding job I had ever had and I was merely challenging myself to see how long I could make it became something I was good at and found meaning and value in. I found that many of the teachings of the Buddha, particularly about overcoming one's own ego could be directly applied to the work. This became even more true when I was teaching, both in how I conducted myself as well as how I guided my students through learning the work and overcoming the same problems I had encountered when I started.

Beyond that, I met some incredible people. When I first started it seemed to be divided mostly along racial lines, but that started to change as new people started getting

promoted, including myself who were against that and wanted to work with everyone and weren't deterred by things like race or language barriers; moreover, were less interested in their own ego and more interested in teaching and sharing what they knew and actively enjoyed working on a team and sharing the burden of less desirable tasks. What our foreman called "Brotherhood," I called "Solidarity" and there were enough of us that wanted the same things. Like often happens, upper management began dismantling and destabilizing that cohesiveness and potential threat. There's a lot I could say about that job, but I'll have to leave it for another time. I got fired right before a meeting where we would be voting on whether or not to accept management's counter-offer to our proposed pay raise or go on strike. We proposed a 2 dollar increase, their counter offer was 5 cents. I would have likely been among the workers who voted to strike.

I discussed what happened after that to some extent in the piece ["Being Homeless during Coronavirus/Covid 19 Pandemic."](#)

## **Notes on the Title: "Zersetzung Bodhisattva"**

"Zersetzung" : Translates to "*Decomposition*" in German. It was the name given to a set of psychological warfare techniques employed by the STASI (Ministry for State

Security) in East Germany during the Cold War. The purpose was to covertly suppress political dissidents or people who were suspected of being dissidents using methods of gaslighting, psychological manipulation, and other methods of abusive control.

There are a number of tactical field manuals floating around the internet, it's not too hard to find legit english translations. Zersetzung is pretty well documented and acknowledged to have happened now.

Other governments throughout the world have employed similar sets of tactics to achieve similar ends, a good example is COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) used by the FBI during the 60's and continuing to the present day

*"Bodhisattva"* : The definition of Bodhisattva varies quite a bit between the different schools of Buddhism. With that said, I'm going to go with my own personal interpretation.

The Bodhisattva is one who is on the path to attaining buddhahood and enlightenment but has made a vow to forgo their own personal enlightenment and remain in compassionate, loving attachment to the material world until all living beings can attain buddhahood and enlightenment together. Their path is one of selflessness, to give all of oneself completely for the benefit of all living beings.

In my interpretation, the Bodhisattva exists as an archetype as well as something that a living person can aspire to become. But for a person to claim enlightenment or call themselves a Bodhisattva would be antithetical. I believe that when one expresses the aspiration to become a bodhisattva, to follow that path, it should be done with the utmost humility, embarrassment, and with sincere love for all living beings who have come before and those who will come after.

In my interpretation, the layperson is venerated and to remain in the world. Monastic life is a luxury not afforded to most; it is one path within Buddhism, but what I'm describing is another.

In this interpretation, Zazen sitting meditation is to be learned as a matter of understanding technique, learning the discipline, the posture, and proper breathing. It's something that can initially be very important, but eventually can be set aside as meditation can be incorporated into one's daily life -Breathing is Meditation. Cooking is meditation. Eating is Meditation. Physical Labor is meditation. Walking is meditation. Learning is Meditation. Teaching is Meditation. Conversation is Meditation. Creative Expression is Meditation. All Activities are Meditation when a person is Mindful.

The Noble Eightfold Path (*Right Understanding, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration*) is of the most value when it is being lived out in the world, full of its distractions, pleasures, hardships, catch-22's, and everything else. The Bodhisattva finds their compassion and love for all living beings and identifies their aspiration out in the world. I do not know how or where it could be found in any other place.

### Putting it together:

The Psychological Warfare Techniques employed through Zersetzung are strikingly similar to those applied in our time, in the United States and all over the world. The technology available makes unfathomable surveillance of the physical world and the digital realm comprehensive. Both the techniques of Psychological Warfare and Surveillance are not just available to Law Enforcement and Governments, they are freely employed in the corporate

world. There is so much overlap with government subcontracting it's former duties to the private sector, there is no longer a line where one ends and the other begins; and to describe the level of corruption in a single phrase: "It's how we're living these days."

There is a lot of reason for powerful people to wage a covert war on the homeless to keep them alienated from the true nature of their experience while at the same time isolated within it, where they must accept what they are being told and choose from a narrow range of options how they can proceed, which usually involves signing up with programs or assistance which are hard to qualify for, easy to lose, which are implicitly restrictive of their options and freedom. This isn't "help" and the conditions of homelessness have been manufactured; these are things that are actively being done to people. Help isn't needed (not the way people think of it). People are being made homeless, most don't do it to themselves. People are being purposely kept homeless. Among groups of homeless, outside agitators and informants sew division, push drugs, cause drama, and prevent meaningful organization and mobilization....now, to be clear, this is done among the entire working class and poor population. But among homeless people, the volume is turned way the fuck up.

Why is that?

Because if they didn't do it, there's a ready-made, revolutionary army encamped at the front lines ready to do the bulk of the fighting and dying for an egalitarian overthrow and mopping up of the entire bloated, sick, and rotting fucking power structure that wants to extract as much wealth for themselves and their friends before the whole thing gets ripped apart.

There are other reasons, mainly sadism.

The Bodhisattva need not call themselves one (they wouldn't). But that spirit and heart is anyone that sees and knows the truth of this world but finds a great love and compassion and is compelled to bravery and self-sacrifice for the good of all. The suffering doesn't end for any of us until it ends for all of us.

And that's why I called it "Zersetzung Bodhisattva."